IDEALISTIC THOUGHT OF INDIA

PREFACE

'.ealism is not a fashionable philosophy in the West to-day. But u the question is asked: Which philosophy in the West has been the most comprehensive and reached the greatest heights and 'epths of thought, we cannot but point to idealism. Similarly, it is asked: Which philosophy in the West has offered the best ›ssible foundation for a philosophy of life, we cannot but refer › idealism. So also in India and Asia in general, the orthodox *smārta*) Indian thought and Buddhist philosophy became ›dealistic when they reached their highest developments. 'dealism has been particularly representative of the life and hought of India till now. And whatever be the starting-point, lealism can be avoided, it seems to the author, only if we forbear › carry our thought to its logical extreme. The present work lepicts the metaphysical strands of the life and philosophy of .ndia and attempts to bring out the full implications of idealistic netaphysics, which are brought together in the conclusion.

A somewhat similar work that has appeared so far is Dr. S. N. Dasgupta's *Indian Idealism*. The reader will see easily the lifference in plan, aim and scope of the two works. The present vork is addressed not only to the orientalist but also to the netaphysician. And this difference, it is felt, is sufficient justifica-ion for the present attempt. Further, it is felt by some that resentations of Indian thought have been mixed up too often vith historical and religious material, and the logical development f the systems and the interrelations of their concepts are too 'en obscured. This complaint was made to the author by some his students and friends. The work makes an attempt to meet eir requirements.

Professor Radhakrishnan's *Idealist View of Life* is aimed more : giving his own ideas than at presenting those of the ancient ıd contemporary thinkers. The present work is one of the first include the doctrines of the contemporary thinkers of India, hich are studied with reference to the ages old philosophical aditions, which are themselves branches of a single tradition, ıl it Upaniṣadic or spiritual. One curious to know the nature the philosophical ferment in renascent and independent India ›uld, it is hoped, also find the book interesting.

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But there are other writers like Mrs. Rhys Davids, Dr. E. J. Thomas, and Professor Radhakrishnan, who maintain that Buddha was not really an agnostic, not a nihilist, and not even opposed to the *ātman* doctrine. Dr. E. J. Thomas writes: "To what form of the ātman doctrine the Buddhist canonical position was originally opposed is not clear. It might refer to some form of Sāṅkhya or the Jaina (Niganthas), but there is nothing in the use of the terms to show that Sāṅkhya was originally opposed, nor is it the ātman doctrine that forms the chief subject in the disputes recorded with the Niganthas."[2] He aptly points out that, among the rival views mentioned and criticized in *Brahmajālasūtra*, we do not find the Vedāntic theory of the atman.[3] His conclusion is that the Upaniṣadic doctrine is not rejected by Buddha. Mrs. Rhys Davids goes even farther. She tells us, in her *To Become or Not to Become*, that there is even God for Buddha, that the Buddhism of Buddha was not Godless.[4] In almost all her writings she maintains that the religion of Buddha had a positive end to attain, that he exhorted his disciples to become *more* and not to cease to exist, and that in many canonical works of the Theravāda are to be found references to a higher and a lower self. She contends that the preaching of Buddha assumed nihilistic form in the hands of his monastic disciples, who, with all their connections with the surrounding world cut off, ceased to think of the self. She writes: ". . . in the growing monasticism, not the immanent Self only, but the man, the minor self, was becoming

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the past, present and future existed.[1] These schools thus do not have much sympathy for the doctrine of momentariness, which is usually associated with Buddhism in general. The best account of the views of the Sarvāstivādins is found in Vasubadhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, which is made available to the Sanskrit-knowing public through the efforts of la Vallée Poussin and Rahula Sankṛtyayana. When expelled from Pāṭaliputra, the Sarvāstivādins established themselves in Madhura, whence they gradually spread towards Kashmir. During the reign of Kaniṣka, who is rightly called the Aśoka of the Sarvāstivādins, a council was held under the presidentship of one Vasumitra, who was curiously enough a Theravādin; and in it were composed, with the help of Aśvaghoṣa, the three Vibhāṣās or commentaries, called the *Upadeśaśāstra*, *Vinayavibhāṣāśāstra*, and *Abhidharmavibhāṣāśastra.* It is on the last of these that the famous work of Vasubandhu is said to have been based. And as the Sarvāstivādins of Kashmir followed the Vibhāṣās, they were called Vaibhāṣikas. They called themselves the Mūlasarvāstivādins or the original Sarvāstivādins, in order to distinguish themselves from the Sarvāstivādins of Madhura, whose only book available is *Aśokāvadāna.* But there seems to be little or no philosophical difference between the two branches.

The very name Sarvāstivādins means those that maintain that everything exists. In *Sarvadarśanasaṅgraha*,[2] these (called Vaibhāṣikas) are represented as epistemological realists and presentationists as regards their doctrine of perception. That is, according to them the objects exist as seen and are directly perceived. The presence of realism shows that the philosophical interest of the Sarvāstivādins is wider than that of the Theravādins. The former are more scholastic, and a fairly well systematized philosophy can be found in their writings. McGovern writes: "The Sarvāstivādins are to the Sthaviravādins what the Sthaviravādins were to the primitive Buddhism. The materialism and realism of the Sthaviravādins was made more explicit and categorical; the agnostic and psychological aspect was largely lost sight of. Buddhism thus became a definite and rigid philosophical system, instead of remaining a body of truths which were effective irrespective of metaphysics."[3] Almost all that the Theravādins held was incorporated by the Sarvāstivādins into their system. Their chief aim

[1] *Kathāvatthu*, p. 101.
[2] P. 7.
[3] *An Introduction to Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 14.

t is *bhāva* because it exists by itself, and *abhāva* because in it
ıere is cessation, there is absence of passions, birth and so forth.[1]

The *āyatanas* (bases) are twelve, the five *indriyāyatanas* or the ases of senses, the corresponding five *viṣayāyatanas* or the bases f objects, the *manaindriyāyatana* or the basis of mind as the xth sense, and the *dharmāyatana* or the basis of the non-sensuous ɔject. Vasubandhu says that only this *dharmadhātu* is subantial, to which the commentary adds that it is the essence and ernal, it is true as an entity, and it alone exists.[2] This seems to ; really making the way for monism and abandoning pluralism. ıriously enough, this *dharmadhātu* is said to reside in the eye.[3] *Abhidharmakośa* also speaks of ignorance or *avijñapti*, which is terpreted by Dr. E. J. Thomas as unconscious action. It is an ımanifest *dharma*, which is the cause of the *mahābhūtas* (the eat elements), earth, water, fire and air, and is a continuous ream.[4] But again, curiously enough this *avijñapti* along with e *vedanāskandha* and the *dharmadhātu* is said to constitute the *mskāraskandha*[5]; so that the division of the self into the five *andhas* seems to be overlapping. This seems to be of a piece th the view of the Andhakas that Nirvāṇa is one of the *samīras*.

The *dhātus* are eighteen. These include the twelve *āyatanas* plus ə five sense organs, and the *manovijñāna*. Or to put it otherse, these include the six senses including the mind, the six *ñānas* including the *manovijñāna*, the *dharmadhātu*, and the e sense objects. But if we have six senses and six *vijñānas*, we ɔuld have six objects of consciousness. If the sixth object is the *ırmadhātu*, then if we identify it with the mind which is said be beyond *manovijñāna*, and then both again with Nirvāṇa have the Vijñānavāda full-fledged; and it is already said in ; commentary that the same mind can be *manovijñāna* just as ; same person can be both father and son. The inconsistency .y be due to the influence of Asaṅga, the Vijñānavādin, who s an elder brother of Vasubandhu. Probably at the time when subandhu wrote his *Abhidharmakośa*, he was not prepared to

N. Dutt: *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism*, p. 190.
Abhidharmakośa, p. 16. *Eko dharmadhātureva asti vastusatyam. Sāravatvat āśitvāt.*
Abhidharmakośa, p. 17.
Ibid., p. 5. *Vikṣiptacittakasyāpi yo'nubandhaḥ subhāsubhaḥ mahābhutānyupāı sāhyavijñaptirucyate.*
Ibid., p. 7. *Avijñaptiḥ vedanāskandaḥ dharmāyatanadhātusca iti ime trayaḥ ;kāraskandhabhedāḥ.*

the world we experience is a mixture of purity and impurity, or to be more precise, is neither pure nor impure; because it is a product of the interperfuming of ignorance and Tathatā.

Aśvaghoṣa distinguishes between two kinds of truth, *paramārthasatya* and *samvṛtisatya*, ultimate truth and empirical truth. Tathatā, Tathāgatagarbha, and Dharmakāya, which are the same entity, are *paramārthasatya*, and the world of objects is *samvṛtisatya*.[1]

Buddha's Dharmakāya is treated by Aśvaghoṣa as a metaphysical entity. He distinguishes between three kinds of body; or rather he says that the Dharmakāya has two aspects, the Nirmāṇakāya and the Sambhogakāya. "Now this activity (in another word, the Dharmakāya) has a two-fold aspect. The first one depends on the phenomena-particularizing consciousness, by means of which the activity is conceived by the minds of common people (*pṛthagjana*), Śrāvakas, and Pratyekabuddhas. This aspect is called the Body of Transformation (*Nirmāṇakāya*)."[2] "The second aspect (of the Dharmakāya) depends on the activity-consciousness (*karmavijñāna*) by means of which the activity is conceived by the minds of Bodhisattvas while passing from the first aspiration (*cittotpāda*) stage up to the height of the Bodhisattvahood. This is called the Body of Bliss (*Sambhogakāya*)."[3] We may say that the Nirmāṇakāya is the physical body, and the Sambhogakāya the subtle body somewhat corresponding to the Ānandamayakośa of the Advaita Vedānta. But in the Sambhogakāya, activity does not completely cease. It is evidently the stage of Karmavijñāna of the Ālaya, and some vestiges of individuation still remain in it. It is somewhat like the Sākṣi, which at least some of the advaitins regard as different for each individual. With Sākṣi in a sense a sort of individuation already begins, though not developed.

Dr. Dasgupta writes that Aśvaghoṣa, in his conception of Bhūtatathatā, combines the conception of Nāgārjuna's Śūnya and that of the Upaniṣadic Brahman.[4] Though Nāgārjuna was later than Aśvaghoṣa, we may admit that logically Aśvaghoṣa's concept includes both the ideas. According to tradition, Aśvaghoṣa was at first an orthodox Vedāntin, later converted to Buddhism by Parśva or one of his disciples. And he might have brought into Buddhism the Upaniṣadic conception. But we have

[1] *The Awakening of Faith*, p. 99. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 100.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1. [4] *Indian Idealism*, p. 88.

objections and maintain the reality of the world. The natural result is that all understood the world in terms of illusion, but they understood illusion differently. So the differences in their understanding of the world are due to their differently understanding illusion and *vice versa.*

XVI

LAST QUESTION ABOUT ILLUSION

Incidentally, we may now clear up one point. Does illusion necessarily imply the mistaking of one existent thing for another existent thing or is it the perception of something unique and imperceptible? Most of the Indian systems accept the former alternative, while the Advaita of Śaṅkara alone propounds the latter. Though Śaṅkara's own language is here ambiguous,[1] the view of his followers is definite. We usually think that we mistake one thing for another. A rope, for example, is mistaken for a snake. The general view is that the rope is wrongly taken for the snake, which was once upon a time perceived. The advaitins, on the contrary, maintain that the snake of illusion is not the snake seen somewhere else and remembered, but a unique one. We have seen that those who advocated the theory that the object of illusion is an *alaukikasat* or non-empirical reality admit some form of *anyathākhyāti* or the theory that in illusion we take one thing for another; for if a non-empirical thing is not mistaken for an empirical thing, we would not have been affected by it. We have seen Kumāra, the commentator on Bhoja, contending that even the advaitin has to accept some form of *anyathākhyāti*; for, unless the *anirvacanīya* (inexplicable) serpent is mistaken for a real serpent, we would not have been frightened by it. But the advaitin would say that there need be no taking of one thing for another. We generally take one thing for another where both the things are regarded as real. I may mistake my friend A for my friend B, and both are real. Here it is a mistake in recognition, and my cognition here is definitely that of recognition. But in the illusion of the snake, the snake is not recognized as one seen previously. And so past reality is not a factor in the cognition of the snake. There is here no mistaking of one reality for another reality. In the judgment, "That is a snake," the thing seen is one, and the cognition does not refer to a past reality. The snake seen

[1] See his introduction to the first of the *Brahmasūtras*.